

Afghanistan: Seven Years of Soviet Occupation

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After 7 years of brutal occupation, the Soviet Union has failed to consolidate its rule over Afghanistan. In 1986, the Soviets were forced to revise drastically their military tactics and replace the ruler they installed in 1979. The resistance grew stronger and retained overwhelming support in Afghanistan, among Afghan refugees, and in international forums.

The following report was prepared by Craig Karp, Afghanistan analyst, with the assistance of other analysts in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Department officials. It is part of an annual series of Special Reports on the situation in Afghanistan.

Summary

The war in Afghanistan remains a stand-off, but military activity has increased on both sides. Combat was more diffuse and unpredictable. During the past year, the *mujahidin* brought the war increasingly to Afghanistan's major cities, particularly the capital, Kabul, and north of the Hindu Kush mountain range.

Afghan resistance activities were widespread, with operations in nearly all parts of the country. The *mujahidin* continue to improve their arms and training and to develop more effective forms of cooperation and coordination. They demonstrated an improved capability to blunt Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) and Soviet operations, and they made major advances in air defense with the increasing use of surface-to-air missiles. Resistance alliance spokesmen brought their cause to several countries, including the United States, and to Islamic and international organizations.

Soviet military forces focused more on small-unit operations and air attacks and no longer relied on massive valley sweep operations. Efforts to strengthen their allies in the DRA came to nought; the regime's forces remain largely crippled by low morale, desertion, and intraparty factionalism. Instead of risking the lives of Soviet troops, the Soviet 40th Army used more firepower, from both artillery and aircraft, sometimes with devastating effect.

Politically, the Soviets have adopted a public posture designed to suggest greater flexibility than heretofore, focusing on their willingness to withdraw but insisting on too long a timeframe. In July 1986, at Vladivostok, Soviet leader Gorbachev promised to withdraw six regiments from Afghanistan in order to provide a "stimulus" for a political settlement. In fact, two of the six

regiments (and part of a third) that were withdrawn in October had arrived in Afghanistan after the Vladivostok speech. The newly introduced units were the only relevant combat units in the withdrawal plan. To avoid even a minor degradation of their military position, the Soviets apparently brought in these units solely for the purpose of withdrawing them.

In Kabul, Babrak Karmal was replaced as Soviet-backed ruler of Afghanistan by the former head of the secret police, Najibullah. The switch in party leadership, in May, was the most important change in the Kabul regime since 1979.

In November, Karmal lost his last senior post as ceremonial head of state. He was replaced by a nonparty member as part of the regime's campaign to suggest a broadened base. Karmal's ouster and purges of his followers led to complicated factional differences within the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

The Soviet occupation has devastated the countryside. Although refugee outflow is reduced, the new refugees appear to have suffered more than those who left earlier. The Soviets have stepped up reprisal attacks on civilians. The Kabul regime has consistently violated the human rights of Afghan citizens through indiscriminate imprisonment, torture, and other abuses. The Kabul regime and the Soviets have been condemned for these abuses by independent international organizations and the UN Human Rights Commission.

Pakistan remains stalwart in its support of the Afghan people, despite a stepped-up Soviet/DRA campaign of sabotage and subversion in the border areas. Air violations of Pakistani territory tripled; artillery shellings increased approximately fivefold. Pakistan has worked for a solution to the crisis through UN-sponsored talks at Geneva. There were indications of increased support for the Afghan people from Iran.

In November, the United Nations voted 122 to 20, with 11 abstentions, to condemn, for the eighth time since 1979, the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan and demand the return of that country to an independent and nonaligned status. Absent a settlement, the United States remains committed to the Afghan cause.

Outlook: Given current trends, the stalemate is likely to continue, and violence will escalate. The Soviets will remain unable to consolidate their political or military position and will find it increasingly threatened. But they will continue to project an international image of flexibility, while looking to invest their client regime with as much political legitimacy as possible. The *mujahidin* resistance will remain steadfast, however; they are prepared to fight on for a decade and more.

Military Activity

The level of fighting fluctuated widely in 1986, not always in accord with normal seasonal patterns. Combat remained at higher than usual levels throughout the winter. In April it was twice that of last year. The pace then slowed, without the massive late spring Soviet combat operations of previous years. Traditionally heavy *mujahidin* activity in the summer also was delayed this year. This lag was due in part to a late thaw in the crucial mountain passes and Soviet/DRA pressure on supply caravans. Fighting soared to historic seasonal levels as 1986 drew to a close.

Despite increased emphasis on disrupting resistance lines of communication, Soviet and regime forces were able to capture only a fraction of resistance supplies. The amount lost to interdiction grew, complicating movement and contributing to a rise in transport costs. However, there has been an increase in the overall volume of weapons and equipment available to the fighters. Soviet and regime attacks on convoys have concentrated on the pack animals used to transport supplies across the passes of eastern Afghanistan.

Resistance ability to ambush Soviet/DRA convoys also increased along with the acquisition of more heavy weapons and improved demolition capabilities. Throughout the country, the *mujahidin* knocked out bridges, shut down stretches of road, and caused long diversions. The road system, the Soviet logistical lifeline, has been severely battered.

The War of the Cities

Despite significant Soviet/DRA efforts to improve control, the *mujahidin* in 1986 brought the war to Afghanistan's major cities. In the smaller provincial capitals, the regime continues to maintain daytime control but has little sway over the surrounding areas. In Kabul, the illusion of increasing urban security fostered over the past few years has been shattered.

Herat. Combat in and around Herat was intense all year. Initiative and control passed from one side to the other. Herat *mujahidin* continue to operate jointly under the command of Ismail Khan and Allahuddin Khan of the *Jamiat-i-Islami* party. In house-to-house fighting, they have occasionally been on the brink of overwhelming regime forces and taking complete control of the town.

Each time, the Soviets and their Afghan allies struck back with massive force, including artillery and air attacks. Destruction may have been worse in Herat than in any other city; Soviet bombardments have seriously damaged centuries-old, internationally renowned monuments. In February, Herat's large Shia district was leveled in retaliation for a resistance attack. DRA forces refused to enter the district, while the *mujahidin* fought on in the rubble.

During the summer, the *mujahidin* reportedly controlled some 90% of the old city and 50% of the new. Soviet and DRA forces launched several operations, including one with nearly 10,000 men, to reoccupy the city. In October, foreign journalists attending "withdrawal" ceremonies at nearby Shindand had to be brought into and out of Herat by armored personnel carrier. The Soviets informed them it was unsafe to spend the night.

Detailed information on the rest of western Afghanistan is sketchy, but combat activity was reported in every province. Coordination may have increased after the designation of Ismail Khan as regional *Jamiat* commander for several western provinces.

Qandahar. In Qandahar, too, fighting raged throughout the year and, at times, control of the city and surrounding areas was in dispute. Qandahar's bazaars are open only a few hours at midday; the city closes down completely by midafternoon.

The Soviets enjoyed some short-term success in the Qandahar region. The *Spetsnaz* regularly ambushed caravans and attacked local resistance bases. In the early spring, a huge Soviet force was dispatched to Qandahar from Kabul.

Although able to reassert control in town only briefly before returning north, it did establish a network of outposts and minefields similar to those around Kabul. Manned chiefly by Afghans, the security belt has complicated but not prevented movement in and out of the city. The outposts have provided enticing targets for the *mujahidin*.

The regime made some political advances with local tribes and villages. Ruling party officials, including politburo member Nur Ahmed Nur, offered money and weapons to tribal chieftains for their cooperation. By exploiting local rivalries, Kabul may have gained temporary support.

Asmatullah Achekzai, the resistance commander who defected to the regime last year, has become something of a local warlord. He lives under regime protection behind the governor's house in Qandahar. Asmatullah's tribal militia, operating south to Spin Buldak, attacked tribal rivals in the resistance, *mujahidin* supply lines, and occasionally even regime targets.

Combat escalated in late summer and early fall. In late August, the *mujahidin* forced abandonment of the central police station. On September 1, the main telephone exchange was attacked and communications cut. Later that week, the radio station was damaged by a rocket, and the Central Bank was hit. Soviet/DRA control was limited to the airport and a single garrison in the city. The highway linking the two points, usually in regime hands, reportedly passed under *mujahidin* control. The Soviets counterattacked, but the *mujahidin* lay low, fearing reprisals. Still, casualties evidently were heavy, particularly among farmers, perhaps because the latter were reluctant to hand over recently harvested grain to the regime.

The persistent resistance challenge to the capital of southern Afghanistan stems from a high degree of cooperation, proximity to supplies, and strong local support. The local resistance council includes the seven Peshawar-based organizations (most have active fronts in the area), parties not included in the alliance (e.g., the *Harakat-Islami* of Ayatollah Mohseni), and independent groups. The council has assumed new functions, both political and military, and has not been hampered by internal squabbles. There are several important local commanders, like Mullah Malang or

Haji Latif of the National Islamic Front (*Mahaz-e-Milli* party), but no individual is dominant.

Kabul and Surrounding Areas. Stability and security in the Afghan capital are a key Soviet goal. The Soviets strengthened the security perimeter around the city this year and attempted to extend it to counter the growing long-range weapons capabilities of the *mujahidin*. The Soviets continued to fire indiscriminately on nearby areas suspected of harboring the *mujahidin*. Even deserted villages north of the city were harassed nightly.

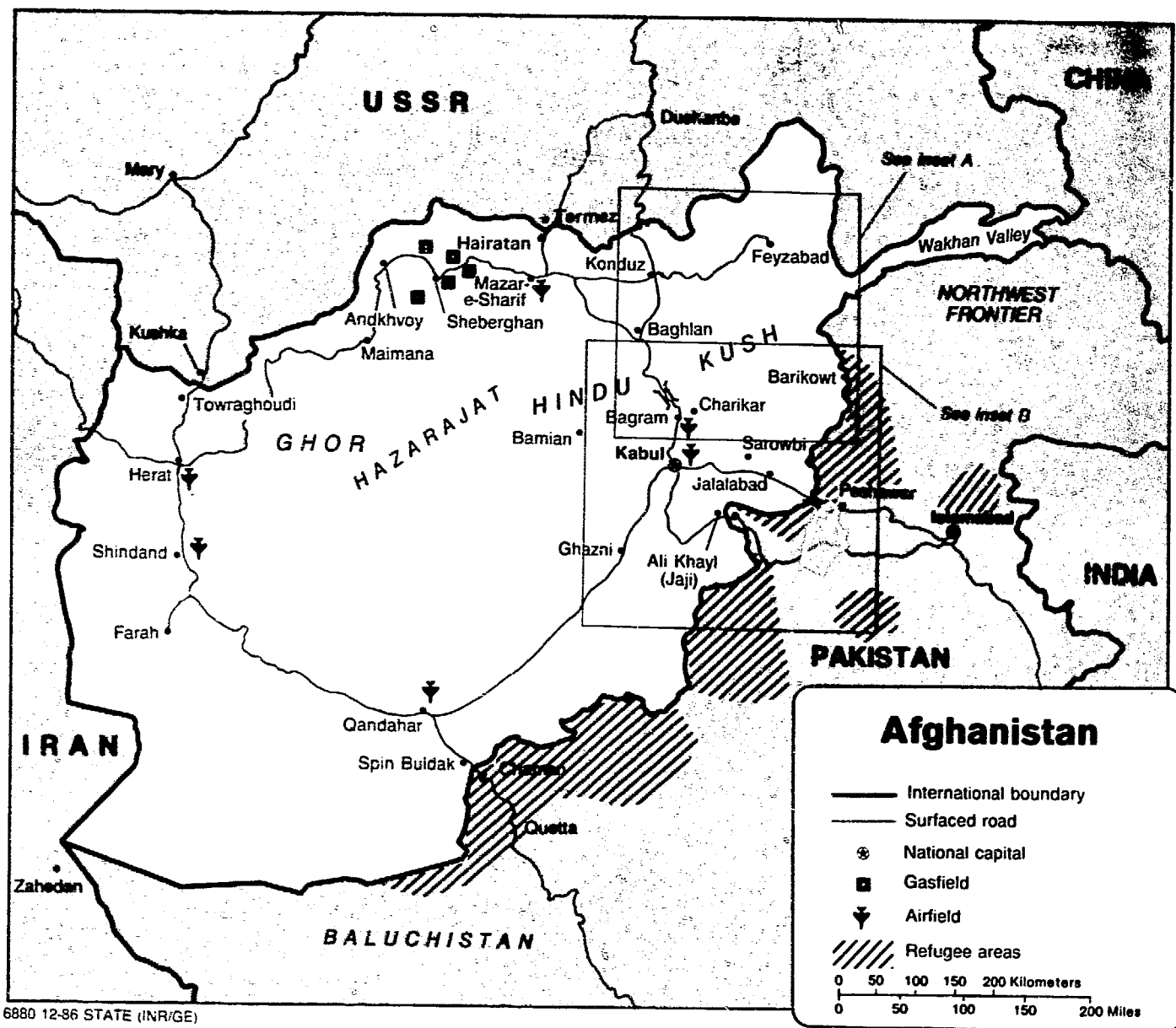
Soviet troops behave like an occupying force. Many Kabul shopowners grumble privately about frequent shoplifting by Soviet civilians and troops. Drunken Soviet soldiers regularly broke into homes and threatened the inhabitants. The Soviets appear to treat their Afghan allies with equal disdain.

Although there was some *mujahidin* activity all year, resistance pressure peaked later than in previous years. At times, particularly in midwinter, there has been a deceptive appearance of normalcy in the capital. The bazaars are filled with many items, including videotapes, not commonly available in the U.S.S.R. Visitors note a surprising number of Mercedes and new Toyotas. But Kabul residents were reminded of the proximity of war by the constant drone of aircraft. Both planes and helicopters eject an increasing number of flares (as many as 50-60 on takeoff or landing) to protect against heat-seeking missiles.

During the first half of the year, the resistance made its impact felt primarily through rocket attacks (especially on such occasions as the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion). In late January, the *mujahidin* fired 122mm rockets at the Soviet Embassy; on January 31, a 122mm damaged the U.S. Embassy compound.

By midsummer, the war intensified for the regime and the Soviets in Kabul. Repeated rocket barrages and periodic firefights followed *mujahidin* penetration of the heavily fortified security belt. As in past years, the Soviet Embassy and Soviet and Afghan military installations were rocketed. In July, a rocket heavily damaged the Polish Embassy.

The resistance periodically rocketed the DRA's 8th Division supply base at Qarghah, on the outskirts of Kabul. On the night of August 26-27, a direct hit set off a 2-hour series of explosions that



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shook the city. A giant fireball at mid-night (possibly rockets or missiles stored at the site) produced a cloud more than 1,000 feet high. The explosions, visible all over the capital, were compared to an erupting volcano. Despite regime claims of "no human losses," as many as 100 were reported killed and perhaps several thousand injured. The Soviets responded quickly by firing on the launch area (retaliation came later), but were unable to catch the attackers. Despite intensified security, within 3 days the *mujahidin* resumed rocketing of the capital. Although the Soviets can replace the

destroyed supplies, the loss of one of the DRA's largest depots was a blow to the regime's prestige.

In late September, the fragility of Kabul's security was brought home to senior Soviet leadership. First Deputy Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers Murakhovskiy was buffeted by an explosion at the Soviet Embassy, perhaps a car bomb, just before a scheduled meeting with Najibullah. The highest-ranking civilian Soviet to visit Kabul in recent years, Murakhovskiy reportedly is close to General Secretary Gorbachev, whom he replaced as Stavropol party chief.

The outskirts of Kabul were again the scene of heavy fighting over the past year. Soviet and regime forces were

forced to return continually to areas pronounced safe and free of *mujahidin*. Area commanders, like Abdul Haq of *Hezb-e-Islami* (Khalis) party, have worked to increase coordination and pressure on the regime.

The **Lowgar Valley**, 40 miles south of Kabul, has been emptied of much of its population due to the severity of the fighting. The Kabul-Gardez road, which runs through the province, is often cut. In August, there was heavy fighting between a Soviet/DRA force and *Hezb-e-Islami* fighters under Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Gulbuddin's men apparently shot down several helicopters, a clear

indication of a more potent resistance air defense. In nearby Sarowbi, a *Hezb-e-Islami* (Khalis) group bombed hydroelectric installations, disrupting the capital's power supply.

Foreigners can still picnic on weekends or play the world's most embattled golf course on the road to **Paghman**, in the mountains just outside of Kabul. Visitors have at times remarked on the apparent calm; yet beginning in the spring, regime and Soviet military forces struck Paghman nearly every month. Many villages have been leveled by air strikes and artillery. For much of the summer, shelling was audible and visible as far away as Kabul. The largest Soviet/DRA operation in Paghman took place in September, targeted against the *mujahidin* who rocketed the Qarghah ammo dump. It marked the beginning of a significant combat role for DRA Interior Ministry troops (*Sarandoy*), whom Interior Minister and Khalq chief Gulabzoi reportedly led personally into battle.

Further north, the **Shomali** suffered from a recurring cycle of resistance and reprisal. Early in the year, numbers of

children injured in a Soviet/DRA bombardment of Estalif were brought to the Kabul children's hospital. In early October, another brutal Soviet/DRA campaign devastated civilian areas and destroyed livestock and crops. This time the regime attempted to stop refugees from fleeing to Kabul.

Mujahidin interdicted traffic along the Salang highway from the U.S.S.R. throughout the year. Even the major Soviet air base at Bagram, 50 kilometers north of Kabul, came under fire several times. In July, a large ammunition store at Bagram blew up.

Panjsher and North Afghanistan

Commander Ahmed Sha'n Mahsud of the *Jamiat-i-Islami* still leads the sole resistance organization in the Panjsher Valley. Although the Panjsher organization was active outside the valley, no major battles occurred within the Panjsher itself. Most *mujahidin* remaining in the valley are camped in its upper reaches, from which they periodically attacked regime outposts and convoys.

In the winter, the Soviets attempted to expand their area of control but were turned back. They occasionally launched heliborne assaults on *mujahidin* positions, with little success.

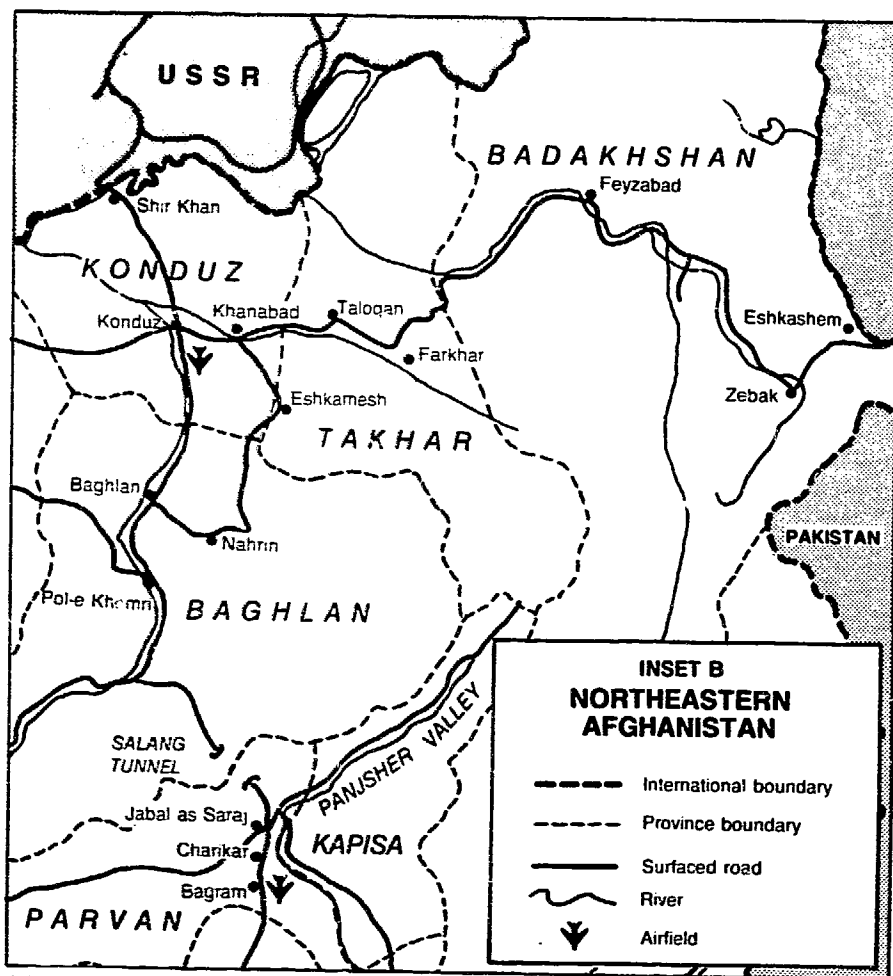
Panjsher is divided into 22 base areas (*karargas*). Each base is responsible for political and civil as well as military affairs in its area. Only a few Panjsheris have fled to Pakistan. In the Soviet/regime-occupied lower valley, the population is comprised mostly of women, children, and the elderly.

Mahsud Moves North. In one of the most significant developments of the conflict, *mujahidin* cooperation expanded out of the Panjsher Valley to the north of the Hindu Kush. For perhaps the first time since the Soviet invasion, a resistance organization played a major role in a large-scale assault outside its home base area. Mahsud has begun to build institutions whose reach extends not only beyond his valley but also across geographical barriers and even party lines.

These organizational efforts began during the year-long cease-fire preceding 1984's massive seventh Soviet offensive in the Panjsher. While focusing his efforts on fellow members of the *Jamiat-i-Islami* party—mostly ethnic Tajiks—Mahsud also aimed at winning cooperation from other parties and ethnic groups. Mahsud initially offered to assist local commanders to consolidate their own base areas. He also provided staff training—stressing the benefits of cooperation—to mid-level commanders, some from other parties or distant fighting groups.

In early 1985, the Council of the North was established, involving commanders from Baghlan, Konduz, Takhar, and parts of Badakhshan. They were encouraged to form local councils and work on civil as well as military affairs. Council members agreed to provide volunteers for central units—professionalized forces proposed by Mahsud to be the core of a mobile regional guerrilla force.

These efforts began to bear fruit in 1986. In March a multiparty force blunted a Soviet drive along the Konduz-Faizabad highway. In mid-June, taking advantage of Ramadan, the Soviets undertook a large operation to counter the growing local threat and to supply garrisons. They attacked *mujahidin* bases around Khanabad and Eshkamesh.



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Soviet/regime forces reportedly killed and wounded hundreds of civilians, burned local crops, and damaged irrigation canals in Takhar. Soviet artillery units later moved to target the proliferating *mujahidin* bases in the area. Both operations were strongly opposed by local *mujahidin* and men from Mazar-e-Sharif, Konduz, and mobile groups from the Panjsher. The Soviets were unable to disrupt evolving resistance plans.

Capture of Farkhar. On August 17, the joint resistance forces went on the offensive. A multipronged assault on the DRA garrison of Farkhar was carefully planned; the *Jamiat* commander from Takhar, Abdul Wadud, assisted by a commander from Panjsher, led the attack. By early next morning, half the garrison was captured, the remainder of the DRA forces were overwhelmed the following day. There were more than 100 DRA casualties at Farkhar. More than 200 were captured, along with nearly 100 tons of supplies and ordnance. Resistance casualties were relatively light but included an important local commander. The fall of Farkhar, in a well-planned assault involving trained forces from six districts in four provinces, was a major strategic advance for the resistance.

In November, with Soviet forces active in the Panjsher, the northern organization again went on the offensive, capturing a number of outposts. In mid-November, they overran the DRA district headquarters at Nahrin and an accompanying garrison. The *mujahidin* captured enough supplies to further the effort to create a regional threat opposing the main Soviet lifeline into Afghanistan.

North Central and Northwestern Afghanistan. Further west, in the northern flatlands bordering the Soviet Union, Soviet/regime control remained tighter than in the rest of the country. Nevertheless, resistance forces harassed the regime throughout the north. The petroleum pipelines from the U.S.S.R. remain a favorite target. In the fall, action escalated in Andkhvoy and Maimana, near the Soviet border.

Central Afghanistan

A coalition of pro-Iranian Shia groups, including Nasr and Sepah-e Pasdaran, now controls the Hazarajat. It remains the major recipient of the limited Iranian support in Afghanistan. Given the absence of regime or Soviet presence and its relative impenetrability, the

Hazarajat is of strategic importance as a refuge for the resistance. The Hazara Shia obtain a significant part of their arms from other resistance groups, in return for protection of supply routes. In 1986, pro-Iranian groups were reported active for the first time against the minimal regime presence in the mountains and outside the Hazarajat, in the



UPI



British Information Services

Top: An Afghan guerrilla keeps his RPG-7 antitank grenade launcher ready.

Bottom: Commander Mahsud teaches military tactics.

north. West of the Hazara heartland, in Ghor, there was an upswing in resistance activity.

Eastern Afghanistan

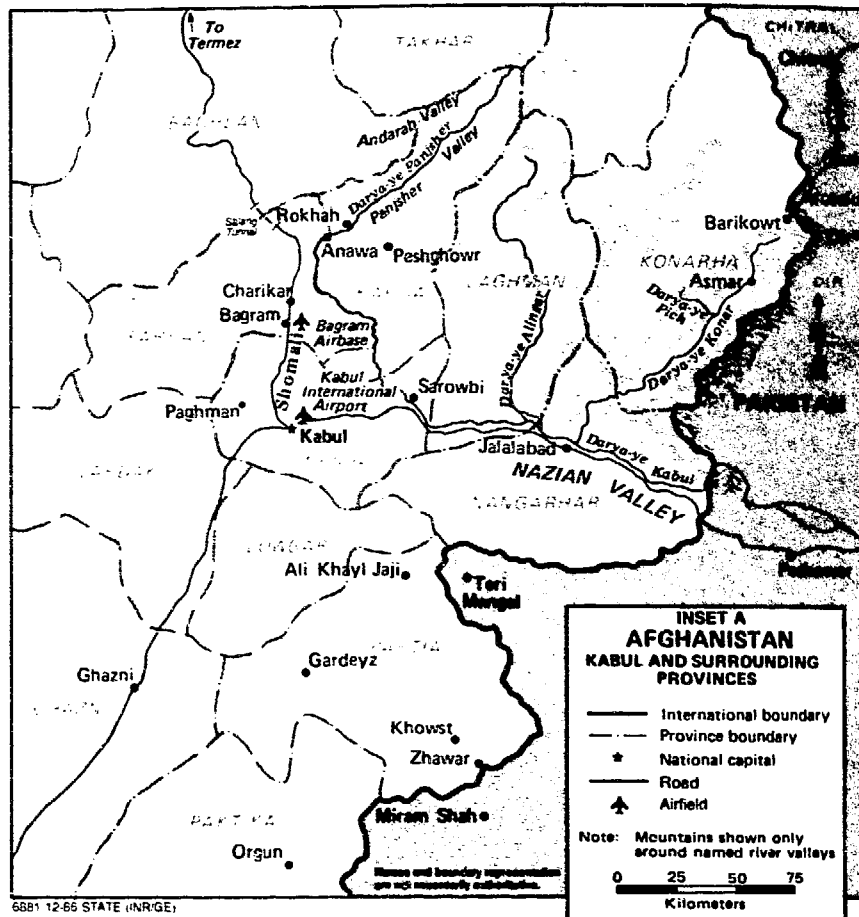
The eastern provinces, particularly near the Pakistani border and the major roads, remain a primary theater of combat. Soviet efforts to interdict resistance supply are focused there. A 50-mile strip along the frontier continues to suffer devastation and depopulation. The regime expanded its border forces and established more posts; more posts were attacked and taken by the *mujahidin*. The Konar Valley, scene of a major Soviet push last year, was relatively quiet, although Barikowt and at times all Soviet/DRA posts in the valley were under siege. Combat centered on key provinces, Nangarhar and Paktia.

Nangarhar Province juts down the Kabul river valley toward Pakistan before ending at the foot of the Khyber Pass. It carries the major road link between the two countries, and considerable commercial traffic moves in both directions.

The provincial capital, Jalalabad, remains securely in regime hands but occasionally was hit by rockets. In 1986, there were more small arms firefights, and out-going Soviet/regime artillery fire. In the fall, *mujahidin* employed surface-to-air missiles to knock down regime aircraft landing at Jalalabad airport, and air operations were suspended.

Early in the year, the strategic Nazian Valley, which leads to the Khyber Pass, was the scene of a major effort to prove that regime forces could operate effectively on their own. After initial setbacks, DRA units secured control of the valley and established a number of posts near the foot of the Khyber. After the withdrawal of the main Afghan force, however, the *mujahidin* attacked troops left behind and forced most of them out. The regime could not reestablish control and by late November had to mount another offensive in the area.

Paktia Province. Both sides were active throughout the year in Paktia, which sits astride important resistance supply routes. The regime can move only with difficulty, if at all, on most of the provincial roads. Ali Khayl (Jaji) was harassed for much of the year, particularly by the *Ittihadia* party of



Sayyaf. The main DRA garrison in east Paktia, at Khowst, must still be supplied by air.

In early April, as fighting escalated, Afghan forces launched a combined ground and heliborne assault on a major resistance base, Zhawar Fort, about 10 kilometers from the Pakistan border. The base was an especially inviting target because it had been described in Western press stories, complete with detailed descriptions and photos, as an impregnable redoubt.

Hezb-e-Islami (Khalis) Commander Jalaluddin Haqqani suffered severe napalm burns in an initial airstrike but stayed on to lead his men. Instead of retreating, the *mujahidin* defended Zhawar. Government troops, numbering at least 1,000, moved steadily forward, suffering heavy casualties, including several aircraft. One of the regime's best commando units was decimated during a parachute landing.

Resistance forces from Paktia and elsewhere moved to help but were slowed down by artillery barrages. Violations of Pakistani airspace associated with the

Zhawar battle were unprecedented. Two weeks after the fighting began, the *mujahidin* withdrew, and regime forces entered the camp. Many *mujahidin* casualties were suffered in the evacuation, when they had no protection from airstrikes. After carting away or destroying considerable supplies, the Afghan Army pulled out. Within a week the *mujahidin* were back. This costly but temporary setback may have discouraged further use of large supply bases, which, like Zhawar, will always be vulnerable to Soviet firepower.

The Afghan Resistance

Seven major resistance parties headquartered in Peshawar, Pakistan, are joined in an alliance and have promoted the international political dimension of the resistance. Smaller groupings of various ethnic, tribal, religious, and political affiliations, including leftists, also exist. A Kabul regime amnesty

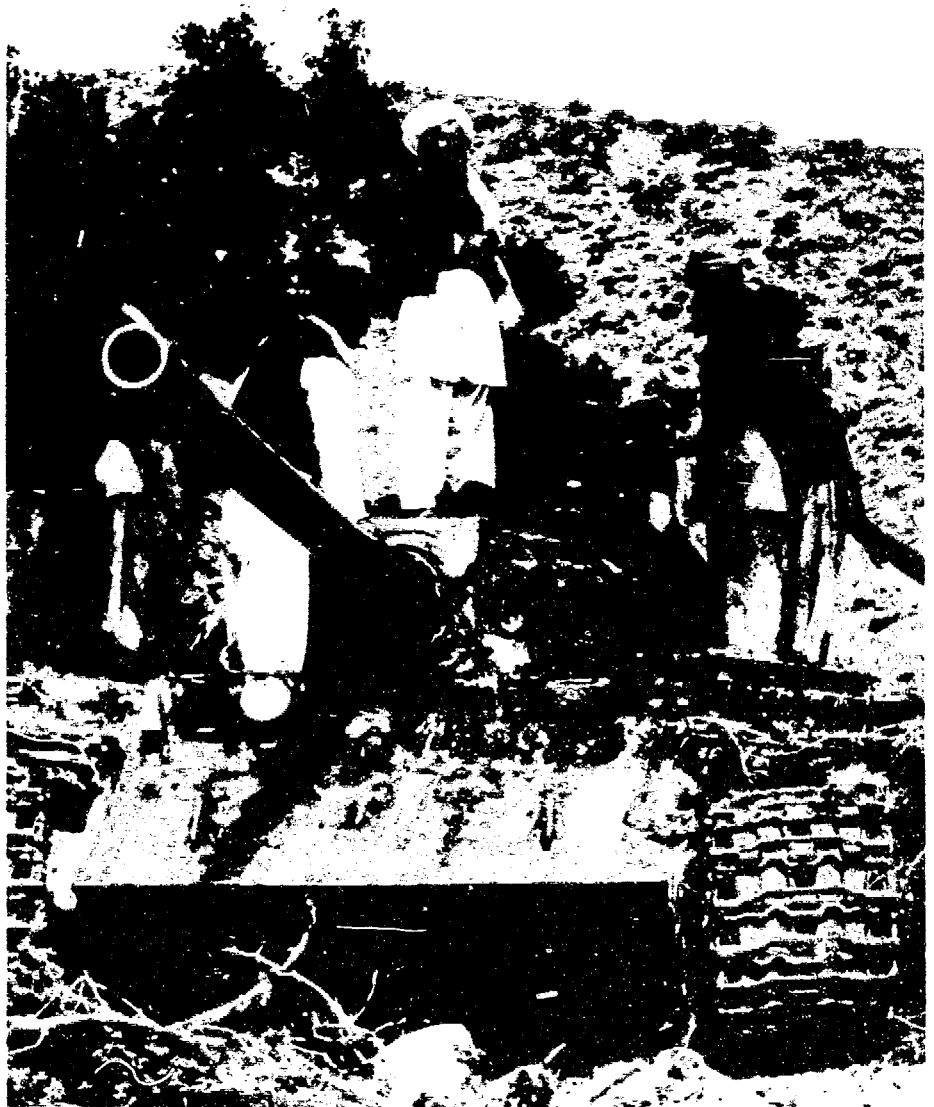
announced on the anniversary of the coup specifically exempted "Maoists." Parties representing the Shia minority tend to be based in Quetta, Pakistan, and in Iran. Most, but not all, of the hundreds of separate fighting groups are linked to one or more of the major parties.

The alliance in Peshawar has now been in existence for 18 months. The spokespersonship has successfully rotated, more or less on a 3-month schedule, through six of the party leaders: Yunus Khalis (*Hezb-e-Islami* Khalis faction); Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (*Hezb-e-Islami*); Burhanuddin Rabbani (*Jamiat-i-Islami*); Sibghatullah Mojaddedi (*Jebh-e Najat-i Milli*); Pir Sayyid Ahmad Gailani (*Mahaz-e-Milli*); and Nabi Mohammadi (*Harakat-e-Ingelab*). The seventh, Abdul Rasool Sayyaf (*Ittihadia-Islami*), is due to serve as representative in early 1987.

The alliance is governed by a council of party leaders. Alliance committees have begun to work on education and social services and coordinate outside humanitarian assistance. The seven parties continued to differ on current tactics and Afghanistan's future.

Military Developments. The resistance is increasingly better armed, trained, and organized, although shortcomings continue, and there are notable differences in military capabilities among the various resistance groups. *Mujahidin* air defense capabilities improved considerably in 1986. The Dashaka (Soviet DShK 12.7mm heavy machinegun) remains the mainstay of resistance air defense. In 1986, the resistance used heavier air defense guns. The *mujahidin* also made greater use of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) of various types. More sophisticated weapons were effective against the full range of aircraft employed by the Soviets and the DRA. Helicopter downings reportedly increased, although it is difficult to estimate exact losses.

Mujahidin supplies have grown considerably over the past few years and include a variety of heavy weapons, including surface-to-surface rockets. Although the rapid development of the logistic net is one of the truly remarkable accomplishments of the resistance, the increase in supplies has created problems relating to movement and storage. Nevertheless, the improved supply situation has contributed to greater cooperation and coordination. A loosening of supply constraints has removed a major cause of squabbling—



Commander Jalaluddin Haqqani on a captured Soviet tank

arms. Some groups now devote resources to improving and protecting supply routes in their territory that are used by other groups further inside the country.

Cooperation also has been stimulated by local residents tired of intra-resistance squabbles. Groups have loaned their heavy weapons to others. On several occasions when a group came under heavy attack, calls went out for support or diversionary actions. Other groups responded, sometimes from far away and across party lines. During spring fighting on the eastern borders, many commanders helped each other. Mahsud sent men and materiel from the Panjsher. Rabbani's call for action to divert Soviet attention from Herat was

answered by an increase in activity countrywide. This is a far cry from the spontaneous and widespread, but uncoordinated and often fractious, opposition to the 1978 Marxist coup.

Regional institutions for coordination are evolving, sometimes involving a single party as in the Council of the North (planned to include parties other than the *Jamiat*); sometimes several parties, as in Herat; sometimes all the groups, such as the Qandahar Council, reportedly chaired by a respected figure without ties to any party. Although still in a preliminary stage, the building of transprovincial (and potentially, multiparty) organizations is unprecedented.

Photo: AP Wirephoto

As a result of these developments, morale is high, and *mujahidin* and civilians alike reveal little war weariness. Most people view the conflict as an acceptable burden that has become part of their lives. Most areas subject to retaliatory attacks are already vacated. The civilian population still overwhelmingly supports the resistance. There is little support for political accommodation with the regime, whether inside the country or among the vast majority in the refugee camps, most of whom have relatives in the resistance. There is no shortage of young recruits.

International Achievements. The alliance has made major strides in presenting the Afghan case to the world. In January, spokesman Sayed Ahmed Gailani traveled to Fez, Morocco, for the 16th foreign ministers session of the Islamic Conference Organization. In June, a delegation led by spokesman Burhanuddin Rabbani came to the United States. They were received by President Reagan and other U.S. officials and Members of Congress.

On its return trip, the delegation visited France and met with Prime Minister Chirac and Foreign Minister Raimond. The visit resulted in the July 17 announcement by the French Government that for the first time France would grant public humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia subsequently received alliance spokesman Rabbani.

In November, spokesman Mohammed Nabi Mohammedi led a delegation to the United Nations during the General Assembly's consideration of the Afghanistan resolution (see "Refugees"). This followed an initial visit to the United Nations in 1985 by an alliance delegation led by spokesman Hekmatyar. En route to a UN press conference with the UN Correspondents Association, delegation members were accosted and assaulted by some staff of the DRA Permanent Mission to the United Nations. The alliance's hosts at the United Nations, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, formally protested this misconduct. The United States later urged the United Nations to take effective measures to prevent any repetition.

The DRA Military

After decades of Soviet training, 8 years of combat, and 7 years of Soviet "advice" and direction, Afghan armed forces remain incapable of defending the regime. The DRA apparently was under



AP/Wide World



JAMA, AP

Top: Soviet heavy machineguns remain the principal air defense weapon of the resistance.

Bottom: Afghan Army deserters who have joined the resistance

Stamps issued by the Resistance



heavy pressure to improve its military capabilities this year. Its inability to make significant gains was a major factor in the Soviet decision to replace Babrak Karmal, but its performance has not improved under Najibullah.

At present there are about 30,000 in the army, and perhaps 10,000 in the air force. The regime employs an equal number of paramilitary border guards, police troops, secret police, and various militias, but total strength is insufficient to curb the resistance.

With the support of Soviet advisers and firepower, and the benefit of intelligence provided by local tribesmen or villagers, a few specialized DRA units have at times been able to hold their own. Early in the year, some elements fought fairly well in Nangarhar and Paktia. But these gains proved transitory.

Morale problems and factional infighting remain serious. Government forces (often at the highest levels) are filled with resistance sympathizers, who provide valuable intelligence and some arms to the *mujahidin*. Truces between garrisons and local *mujahidin* are not unusual.

Conscription and Desertion. The familiar DRA press gangs were intensified and exemptions tightened in order to meet the goal of an expanded military. In March, Kabul school teachers lost their exemptions and were told to report. Students living abroad were drafted as soon as they returned to Afghanistan; others were required to show proof of service before going abroad to study or gaining admission to the university. One reported dragnet picked up graduating high school students before they could flee the country. A May "amnesty" decree for army deserters and others who had evaded service apparently has yielded few results.

When Najibullah came into power, he intensified the conscription campaign, extended it to party members, and lashed out at those who avoid military service by "hiding under the wings of influential relatives." The drive has probably alienated many of the regime's supporters.

Enhanced conscription has only resulted in increased desertion. Indeed, desertion rates may have worsened over the past year. Eight years into the war, whole units still decamp en masse from time to time. High-level officers (many with a record of cooperating with the

mujahidin) continue to desert. In the summer, the deputy commander of Paktia Province, Colonel Hashmatullah, defected, then immediately after a press conference in Pakistan returned to fight against the regime. In October an Afghan pilot flew his MiG-21 to Pakistan.

Paramilitary Forces. Regime efforts to mobilize additional support from the paramilitary forces have made some progress. These locally recruited, lightly armed troops, who man many border posts, although disinclined to battle the *mujahidin*, may provide the regime or the Soviets with useful intelligence.

Militia. The regime also has had some success in expanding militias. Most worker, party, female, or other urban militias have had little effect. Tribal militias operate under the Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities. This year some have been more willing to fight local *mujahidin*, often their clan or tribal rivals. The militias were increasingly integrated into joint operations with Soviet and regular army troops but probably have little utility outside home areas.

The tribes are fickle, and often remain on the regime payroll only for the winter months. In December 1985, the regime recruited 400 Hazaras near Ghazni and stationed them with an army brigade. The Hazaras joined the *mujahidin* and attacked the brigade, bringing along many deserters. The regime had to bring two other brigades in to restore order. Later in the winter, a group of young Afridis were trained as militia in the Nazian Valley, near the Pakistan border. They turned on their advisers the first time they were used in combat and caught them in a crossfire with the *mujahidin*. The Afridis then escaped over the border.

Police. Many of the DRA's fewer than 20,000 police have been turned into a light infantry force, the *Sarandoy*. They were increasingly active in the closing months of 1986, especially in joint operations with the Soviets. Under the control of Khalq faction chief and Interior Minister Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoi, the *Sarandoy* is an independent Khalq force, led by Khalq ex-army officers and subject to the same pattern

of conscription and desertion as the army. There were continued reports of *Sarandoy* fighting against forces loyal to the ruling Parcham faction.

The Secret Police (KHAD, WAD). In January, KHAD (the Dari acronym for State Information Services) was promoted to the Ministry for State Security (Dari acronym: WAD), but it is still generally known by its former title. Like the Soviet KGB, the ministry also has its own combat units.

The change of name and status of the secret police has not changed its methods or reputation as a brutal organization. Human rights groups amply document its use of torture. The ministry has a major hand in the subversion campaign against Pakistan. Yet even the secret police have factional problems: pro-Babrak employees are in an excellent position to cause trouble for Najibullah and the Soviets.

The Soviets in Afghanistan

The Soviet Union evidently believes that in the long run its objectives in Afghanistan can be ensured by military means, augmented—but not replaced—by political tactics. Soviet military operations are designed to destroy the *mujahidin* and to gain time and acceptability for the "revolutionary" regime in Kabul.

Reporting to the Soviet Party Congress in February 1986, Gorbachev described Afghanistan in terms of Soviet border security. Soviet policy is calculated to win domestic and international credibility for the Kabul regime and to curtail the support the *mujahidin* have received from Pakistan and other countries. Moscow became more involved than ever before in manipulating Afghan domestic politics, but achieved little success.

Military Developments. In 1986, the Soviets continued to adjust their numbers, weapons, and tactics to counter the greater capabilities of the *mujahidin* and compensate for the DRA's limited military effectiveness. Only a few thousand underutilized troops left during a much-publicized "withdrawal," not as many as Gorbachev promised or as claimed by the Soviets (see p. 10).

Soviet combat forces are roughly the same in number as last year. According to the most recent estimates, there are

Soviet Withdrawal Deception

In his July 28 speech at Vladivostok, Gorbachev announced:

Before the end of 1986, six regiments—one tank regiment, two motorized rifle regiments, and three antiaircraft regiments—will be returned from Afghanistan to the homeland, with their authorized equipment and arms. These units will return to their areas of permanent deployment in the Soviet Union and in such a way that all those who are interested can easily verify this.

The Soviet Defense Ministry later announced that the withdrawal would be completed by the end of October 1986. Soviet military spokesmen insisted that the units to be withdrawn had been in Afghanistan for years.

Through a variety of methods, including national technical means of verification, the United States tracked the different categories of units in question before Gorbachev's July 28 speech and afterward.

Air Defense. Soviet air defense units play no military role against the *mujahidin*, who lack an air force. Yet three air defense regiments comprised half of the promised withdrawal package, illustrating the limited significance of the original Soviet proposal. These units were withdrawn to the Soviet Union as Gorbachev promised. The SA-8 surface-to-air missile regiment based in Kabul was withdrawn from Afghanistan on October 19. The SA-8 air defense regiment from Shindand departed for the Soviet Union by October 21. The air defense regiment from Konduz—the last of the six regiments to withdraw—also returned, whereupon the Soviets announced the withdrawal was complete.

The only **tank regiment** in Afghanistan, stationed at Shindand, was severely understrength and not involved in any significant combat. To bring the unit to full strength for the withdrawal parades, the Soviets sent additional tanks into Afghanistan in September and October. On October 15, the day promised by Moscow, withdrawal ceremonies began. Correspondents noted that the vehicles showed few signs of wear and reported that the Soviet soldiers claimed never to have seen any *mujahidin*. Subsequently, the reconstituted tank regiment returned to the U.S.S.R.

Motorized rifle regiments constitute the heart of the deception effort. Of all the units cited by Gorbachev, only the motorized rifle regiments are capable of finding and fighting the *mujahidin*. Although the Soviets included these units in order to present a more credible withdrawal package, they did not intend to degrade the military effectiveness of their forces in Afghanistan.

Within days of the Vladivostok speech, the Soviets began to move additional units into Afghanistan through Termez in the east and Kushka in the west. These new units moved into areas of the Soviet bases at Shindand and Konduz normally occupied by the motorized rifle regiments that were garrisoned there but had temporarily moved to nearby dispersal areas.

The newly introduced motorized rifle regiments were far different in equipment from the regiments they temporarily displaced. Specifically, the new regiments had truck-towed artillery, as contrasted with self-propelled artillery. They did not have the tracked armored personnel carriers, called BMPs, standard equipment for the units they replaced. In addition, to transport troops, the newly introduced regiments depended principally on trucks. To operate effectively and protect troops

from *mujahidin* attacks, the Soviets had come to rely on armored personnel carriers instead of trucks to move motorized rifle troops in Afghanistan.

In September, the introduction of the new motorized rifle regiments was complete. On October 17, the new motorized rifle regiment at Shindand was on its way north and soon arrived at Kushka in the Soviet Union. About the same time, the old motorized rifle regiment from Shindand, with its characteristic tracked armored personnel carriers, had begun to return to its garrison.

By October 21, the newly introduced Konduz regiment had arrived at Termez, in the Soviet Union. Shortly thereafter, the motorized rifle regiment originally stationed in Konduz began returning to base. All motorized rifle regiments in Afghanistan on the day of Gorbachev's speech remained there at the end of 1986.

Previous Soviet Deception. The Soviets have previously staged deceptive withdrawals or reductions of forces. In 1980, for example, they announced the withdrawal from Afghanistan of some troops several weeks before the Moscow Olympics. Numbering about 5,000, these troops turned out to be forces unsuited to Afghan terrain or to counter guerrilla operations. Even as the unwanted forces were being withdrawn, new and more useful units were being introduced.

Soviet Insecurity. The Soviets' unwillingness to withdraw militarily significant assets from Afghanistan—despite a commitment from Gorbachev himself—indicates something important. Contrary to their assertions for international audiences and back home in the U.S.S.R., the Soviets apparently do not feel secure enough to give up any real fighting capabilities.

about 118,000 Soviet troops in the country, supported by some 30,000 additional troops in the Soviet Union.

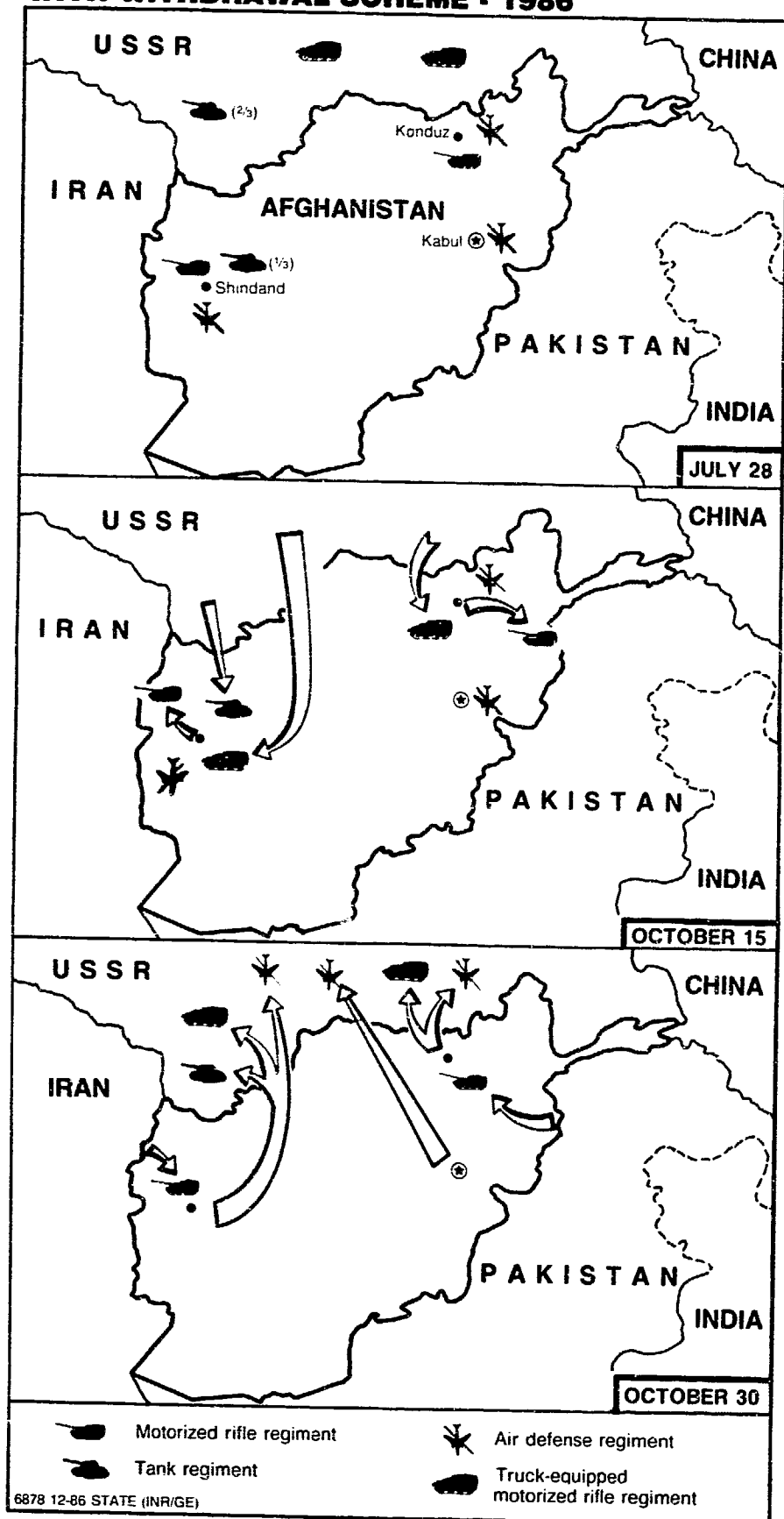
In 1986, the Soviets drastically revised their military tactics in Afghanistan. In the past, large valley sweep operations using tanks and armored personnel carriers and up to 10,000 troops were the centerpiece of the Soviet effort. Now Soviet operations are smaller scale, more focused, and

often employ heliborne assaults. Some Soviet units were more active and aggressive, concentrating on the border areas, resistance supply lines and, when they could be found, stockpiles and bases. Most Soviet troops, however, remain in static defensive/security deployments. The overall counterinsurgency capabilities of the average Soviet conscript remain unimpressive.

Soviet tactics seem aimed at minimizing of casualties. The Soviets used more firepower, from artillery and the air, sometimes on short notice, often with devastating effect.

There were at least 3,000 casualties through the fall of 1986, bringing the total number of Soviet losses in Afghanistan since 1979 to at least 30,000–35,000, more than one-third of whom were killed. Some Soviet sources indicate that casualties could be considerably higher, perhaps as many as 25,000 killed over the course of the year, but this cannot be confirmed. In addition, the Soviets and Afghans together have lost nearly 1,000 aircraft to the

SOVIET FORCE MOVEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH WITHDRAWAL SCHEME - 1986



mujahidin since 1979, mostly helicopters. Aircraft losses increased in the latter part of the year.

Moscow has increased the use of its Special Purpose Forces (*Spetsnaz*). Their numbers have grown over the past few years to roughly 4,500-5,000. These better trained and more experienced troops deploy in smaller formations than other units, are often active at night, and are used to ambush resistance convoys. Even the *Spetsnaz* have, at times, been defeated, however, and they appear to experience the same morale, discipline, and other problems as regular Soviet combat troops in Afghanistan. Some *mujahidin* groups use counter-ambush tactics against the *Spetsnaz*.

In 1986, the Soviets invested further in military facilities in the country. They upgraded military and dual-use infrastructure, including road links from Soviet Turkestan. They continued to refine their order of battle and send in more appropriate equipment. Recent additions include rockets, a variety of artillery weapons, and the SU-25 ground attack fighter. Existing equipment has been upgraded. Most wheeled armored personnel carriers were replaced with newer models or tracked vehicles. Self-propelled artillery has been substituted for towed artillery in many units.

Soviet forces continue to suffer from low morale problems. Disease, particularly dysentery and hepatitis, may keep as many troops out of action as combat injuries. Theft and sale of military stores (including fuel, weapons, medicine, and auto parts) are common. The black market is so developed that orders can be placed for specific items. Soviet soldiers often use the proceeds to pay for liquor and drugs.

Soviet Defectors and Prisoners. In the early years of the conflict, few prisoners were taken by either side. There is no evidence of major detention centers for resistance fighters, but important captives are probably held in regime prisons. The resistance is believed to hold some Soviet prisoners in secure base areas inside Afghanistan, but few prisoners survive long. In Paghman, a group of Soviets captured by the *mujahidin* have reportedly been offered in return for *mujahidin* prisoners. The son of a Soviet Communist Party dignitary reportedly was exchanged for captive *mujahidin* in 1986.

Several Soviets have defected to the resistance; some convert to Islam and

even fight alongside the *mujahidin*. In November, five Soviet soldiers serving with the *mujahidin* for a number of years were granted asylum in Canada.

Soviet Political Moves. Gorbachev inherited the various military and political efforts to resolve the Afghan problem. There is no indication that he disagrees with previous policy or tactics, but he has tried to develop an image of flexibility. The UN-sponsored Geneva talks constitute the main focus of Soviet diplomacy.

Gorbachev's two major statements on Afghanistan have each contained a dramatic gesture, however, and he seems intent on improving Moscow's public image. He told the 27th Party Congress in February that a schedule for the step-by-step withdrawal of Soviet forces had been worked out with the Afghan side and would be implemented when a political settlement was achieved. This was Moscow's first high-level public confirmation of a withdrawal timetable. On July 28, Gorbachev announced in Vladivostok that six Soviet regiments would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of the year to provide a "stimulus" for a settlement.

Neither statement produced significant results. Following the February Party Congress, the timetable was discussed in Geneva, but Kabul insisted on an unrealistic period of up to 4 years for the withdrawal.

The Vladivostok initiative was more misleading, and the token six-regiment withdrawal proved to be an exercise in deception (see box). The ruse was implemented even though the Soviets must have been aware it would be detected. The withdrawal occurred just before the November UN General Assembly vote on Afghanistan and did not convince the world of Soviet interest in a just solution. The vote against the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan was approved by the same overwhelming number, 122, as in 1985.

Criticism on the Home Front.

There is little evidence of widespread opposition to the war in the U.S.S.R. Public support is mostly passive and unenthusiastic, but complaints about the war have become more frequent and open. Special counterpropaganda campaigns have been launched in the three Soviet republics bordering Afghanistan.

To generate greater support, the Soviet media have expanded coverage of the fighting. Combat fatalities are reported more frequently, decorations

Najibullah—Moscow's New Man in Kabul

Mohammed Najibullah¹ was born in Kabul in 1947, the son of a banker and merchant and grandson of a Paktia tribal chief. As a youth, he joined his father who was posted with an Afghan bank in Peshawar, Pakistan. His tribal roots are with the Ahmedzai, part of the Ghilzai confederation of Pashtun tribes. Najibullah is married and has one daughter.

Najib entered Kabul University as a medical student in 1964. In 1965 he joined the newly established PDPA and was recruited into Babrak Karmal's Parcham faction. In 1967 he followed Karmal when the PDPA split. He was imprisoned in 1969 for political activities. Back in school in 1970, he was soon jailed again. He finally earned his medical degree in 1975, served in the military for a year, and then became a full-time political activist. He is a capable speaker in Pashto, unlike Karmal, as well as in Dari, and was a street orator in the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1977, Najibullah was named to the PDPA's central committee and was appointed to the Parcham liaison committee with the Soviet Union. After the PDPA coup in 1978, he became a member of the Revolutionary Council. Dismissed later that year, he spent much of 1979 abroad—first as Ambassador to Iran and then in exile in Eastern Europe.

After the Soviet invasion in December 1979, Najibullah returned to

¹ The General Secretary is known by the single name Najibullah, but he is often referred to as Najib. Some sources indicate he purposely dropped the "ullah"—a reference to God—though now he sometimes uses it to suggest new-found piety.



Afghanistan. In 1980 he became head of KHAD, the secret police, and was once again named to the Revolutionary Council. He became a full member of the politburo in 1981. In late 1985 he was promoted from KHAD to become a secretary to the central committee, reportedly with party responsibility for all security forces. In May 1986, he became General Secretary of the PDPA and has headed the Kabul regime since then.

Since accession to leadership of the PDPA, Najib has often appeared in public and has traveled the country, including war-torn Herat, and met frequently with the press. Najib is close to the Soviets and responsive to their wishes. As party leader, as he was when he headed the secret police, Najib is responsive to his Soviet advisers. Like Karmal, he is usually accompanied by Soviet bodyguards. Many Afghans believe that he is a long-time KGB agent.

for heroism played up, special features on men fighting in Afghanistan carried in their hometown newspapers, and the war generally portrayed with increasing realism. A reading of *samizdat* (privately circulated dissident manuscripts) suggests that the expanded publicity may have had the unintended consequence of making Soviet citizens more worried about the war.

There are signs of increasing unhappiness about the Afghan conflict among veterans and those who might be sent to Afghanistan. Draft evasion appears to have increased, prompting the Soviet authorities to criticize sharply those who try to avoid military service in general and service in Afghanistan in particular. Reports of payments for exemptions or safer assignments have become more common.

The Lithuanian *Komsomol skaya Pravda* on October 10 carried an "Open Letter to Those Who Attempt To Protect Their Sons From the Difficulties of Military Service." Written by an officer of the Baltic Military District, the article condemned Lithuanian youth who try to use forged medical records to gain deferment and parents who seek "soft" assignments for their sons.

Regime Developments

In a slow-motion process, Babrak Karmal was replaced in 1986 by Najibullah as Soviet-backed ruler of Afghanistan. It was the biggest change in the Kabul regime since 1979, when the Soviets brought Karmal in with their invading troops to head the "new phase of the April Revolution."¹

Soviet dissatisfaction with Karmal increased over the years. The Soviets were unhappy with his inability to heal the factional dispute and with his lack of tangible military and political gains. Moreover, his well-known installation by Soviet forces was an international liability. Pakistan specifically had refused to deal with a Karmal-led government. Gorbachev did not see Karmal during the CPSU congress in March, a clear snub.

In early April Karmal flew back to Moscow, ostensibly for medical care, and then dropped out of sight. In contrast, the Soviets warmly received Prime Minister Keshitmand during a state visit April 21-24. Karmal still was absent from Kabul during the April 27 anniversary of the 1978 Marxist coup, and his supporters there began to worry about his fate. There was an unprecedented series of semipublic protests by regime backers. A demonstration by women was probably organized by Karmal confidante and women's organization head Anahita Ratebzad. (Najibullah condemned these protests as "the black strivings of factionalists." He later took the women's group from Anahita by changing its name and appointing a woman militia member as the first head of the new organization.)

The gesture of support was for naught. Babrak returned quietly to Kabul on May 1. The following day Soviet troops took up key positions around the city. At the 18th plenum, Karmal "asked" to be relieved of duties

as General Secretary of the PDPA "for health reasons." The politburo then confirmed Najibullah as party leader.

For a time, the regime, and particularly the Soviets, promoted the notion of a collective leadership in Kabul, with Najibullah as party chief, Karmal heading the Revolutionary Council, and Prime Minister Keshitmand running the government. However, there was no question that Najibullah was in charge, and over the summer regime media began to refer to him as commander in chief.

Najibullah at first moved cautiously toward consolidating control over the party. He was frank in criticizing party shortcomings. In a speech to the 19th plenum in July, he complained about cadre arrogance, nepotism, unwillingness to go to the provinces, and outright corruption, including embezzlement, bribery, and theft of state property. At the plenum he announced a dramatic expansion of the central committee, packing it with unknowns presumably loyal only to him. Karmal loyalists were purged.

Parcham split. The ouster of Karmal and removal of his followers led to the emergence of a pro-Karmal opposition. Its reported activities range from a slowdown in the ministries to cooperation with the *mujahidin*. The dispute could be taking on an ethnic tinge, with Babrak's multiethnic urban backers against Najibullah's largely Pashtun followers.

Foreign journalists brought into Afghanistan to witness the October Soviet "withdrawal" ceremonies were abruptly ordered out of the country after seeing a spontaneous pro-Karmal demonstration.

Instability within the regime may have led Moscow finally to agree to remove Karmal. The 20th PDPA plenum was suddenly convened on November 20. The plenum endorsed Karmal's "request to be relieved of party and state posts." Stripped of the chairmanship of the Revolutionary Council presidium (head of state) and a spot on the politburo, Karmal still retained seats on the Revolutionary Council and the central committee. Najibullah told the central committee that Babrak's health was "deteriorating." Karmal was voted a medal (the Order of the April Revolution) and granted a pension.

The plenum awarded secret police chief Ghulam Farid Yacubi the politburo seat vacated by Karmal. Khalq chief Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoi and Democratic Youth Organization head Farid Mazdak were elected candidate members.

In December, Foreign Minister Shah Mohammed Dost, a long-time diplomat and holdover from the pre-1978 regime, was replaced by Abdul Wakil, a cousin of Babrak Karmal, and most recently ambassador to Vietnam. Dost was made a minister of state and sent to the United Nations. At the same time, Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Nazar Mohammed was named First Deputy Prime Minister. His replacement, the current Deputy Prime Minister, Gen. Mohammed Kafi, served as Defense Minister from 1979 to 1982. Changes in the upper echelons of the regime were expected to continue.

Khalq revival. Were Najibullah able to forge a unified party, through purges or conciliation, it would be a major step toward regime consolidation. The increased activities of the paramilitary police troops suggest a deal with the Khalqis and their leader, Interior Minister Gulabzoi. Tribal connections between Najibullah and many of his fellow Ghilzai tribesmen of the Khalqis may account for this unanticipated rapprochement. On the other hand, Gulabzoi may be positioning the Khalqis to return to power, were Najibullah to falter. In any case, Khalq disaffection continues, compounded by its ideological disagreement over the "broadening" of the regime and the steady abandonment of radical Marxist policies.

Efforts To Suggest a Broadening of the Regime. On December 26, 1985, the regime announced the appointment of a number of purportedly "nonparty" figures. Sayed Amanuddin Amin was named deputy prime minister; a technocrat, he previously had served the DRA as a deputy minister and chairman of the Economic Consultative Council. Other appointees also had held important regime positions, but they will add little credibility to the regime.

In January 1986, Kabul added 79 new members to the Revolutionary

¹For background, see Special Reports 79, 86, 91, 106, 112, 118, 120, 135, and 139.

Council, doubling its size. Kabul claims that more than half of the expanded council are not party members. The presidium (chaired at the time by Karmal) also was enlarged. Haji Mohammed Chamkani, who had chaired the 1985 Border Tribes *Jirga*, was named vice president of the presidium, the first time a nonparty figure had been elevated to such a high position. In April, the tribal *Jirga* (assembly of tribal leaders) obtained a secretariat, and Chamkani's visibility increased. In November, following Karmal's ouster, Chamkani was named interim chairman of the Revolutionary Council presidium.

The regime claims to have begun elections in all provinces only party elections have been held since the 1978 coup), but it has been unable to conduct them outside secured areas. One of the excited victors confessed he was unaware he had been nominated until just before hearing he was elected.

Kabul's only gain has been the induction into the party of two leftist labor groups that for 7 years had been independent (Democratic Workers of Afghanistan; Revolutionary Society of Afghanistan's Toilers). This merger indicates that "national reconciliation" is not intended to lead to a departure from Kabul's Marxist and pro-Soviet orientation.

Since publication in December 1985 of a *Pravda* article suggesting the need to include real elements of the opposition in the broadening process, Kabul has often repeated its interest in national reconciliation. The National Fatherland Front (NFF, Kabul's organizational framework for integrating nonparty groups into the regime) was charged with coordinating the process—a sure indication that power sharing is not intended. The delay in the NFF congress scheduled for early November suggests a lack of progress on reconciliation in addition to problems with the draft constitution (in preparation since early in the year). Regime efforts to entice cooperation from the vast majority of Afghans have been to no avail.

The Afghan Economy

Given wartime disruption, the economy of Afghanistan continues to provide a standard of living not greatly different from that before the 1978 Marxist coup. In some areas, particularly along major lines of communication for both sides, the countryside has been devastated and depopulated. But in many parts of the country, traditions of autarchy, subsistence farming, nomadic and semi-nomadic herding, smuggling, and informal trade persist. The regime claims that material damage caused by the war totals 40 billion Afghanis¹ (up a third from last year's claim).

Food. Kabul's bazaars remain amply stocked, although some items were in short supply. In general, the food supply in Afghanistan was adequate, although shortages of some items continued in some areas. As wheat accounts for about 60% of the Afghan diet, most of the population has enough to eat.

Abundant snowfall in the winter months of 1985-86 and good weather in the growing season produced a wheat crop about as large as harvests before the Soviet invasion. Because several million refugees have fled, per capita wheat availability is probably higher than before 1979. The impact of land abandonment in areas of heavy fighting has been softened by the shift from cash crops to wheat in regions of less intense fighting.

Most land abandonment and food shortages occur in a 50-mile belt along the Pakistan frontier. Most reports of food shortages and most of the refugees come from this area, where fighting has been heavy. In the fall, shortages were reported in the northwest.

Scarcities are aggravated by damage to Afghanistan's limited transportation infrastructure. Shortages are worst in the spring. Some items are periodically in short supply: vegetables, oils, rice, sugar, and tea. The supply of meat, however, appears adequate. Flocks have stabilized at preinvasion levels, probably because most of the 20 million sheep are safe in the mountains when the fighting is heaviest.

¹The U.S. dollar is worth 55 Afghanis at the official rate. In the Kabul money market, one of the freest exchanges in the world, it was 139 Afs/dollar in January, and in November about 152 Afs/dollar.

The cities, especially refugee-swollen Kabul, are largely fed from imports. In recent years, about half of the DRA's grain imports has come from the Soviet Union.

Scorched Earth? Although there are many credible reports of deliberate Soviet/regime destruction of crops, homes, and agricultural infrastructure, it appears that the Soviets do not have a general scorched earth policy. Total crop destruction has been limited and has not had much impact on countrywide food availability.

Electricity shortages fluctuate with *mujahidin* damage to the hydroelectric plants. Market conditions in the provinces are more varied. Fighting near the trade routes temporarily raised prices of items that have to be brought in from outside.

DRA Economic Policies. A major component of the regime's initiative to "broaden the social base" was an effort to involve the private sector. In January, when Kabul announced a planned doubling of the state share of retail trade, an Economic Consultative Council was set up to improve the climate for "national traders and entrepreneurs." Its chairman, Sayed Amanuddin Amin, was named a deputy prime minister. In the summer, Kabul offered to back investors with low interest loans. Traders have fared rather well; their margins have been adequate to cover spiraling transport costs as well as the obligatory payoffs to both sides.

DRA Five-Year Plans: Growth in Selected Sectors

	1981-86	1986-91
Increase in GNP	11%	25%
Industry	NA	28%
Agriculture	NA	15%
Natural gas extraction	11%	260%
Government worker housing	200%	1100%
State share of retail trade	22%	47%
State investment	67 billion Afs.	114.5 billion Afs.

Source: *Radio Kabul*, January 1986.

The private sector grew apprehensive during the summer as Najibullah increasingly criticized Commerce Minister Jallalar, a nonparty civil servant long regarded as guardian of its interests. Businessmen worried that their conscription exemptions and deferments would be eliminated.

In January, after extensive consultation with the Soviets, Prime Minister Keshtmand reported the successful completion of a Five-Year Plan (1981-86). He also previewed the next Five-Year Plan (1986-1991), which commenced in March, the beginning of the Afghan year. The large increase in natural gas output may be due to a new find, hinted at by Keshtmand in a March speech.

Soviet Economic Relations With the DRA. In 1985, Moscow pledged \$320 million in new economic aid—the second largest commitment since 1979. The new agreements provided \$120 million in food and consumer goods grants for 1985 delivery, and \$200 million in credits for projects in Afghanistan's new Five-Year Plan. The latter include the Sarowbi II hydropower plant, tunnels on the Hairatan-Kabul highway and Salang Pass road, technical schools, and extensive road construction and modernization. Such projects help support Soviet political and military efforts in Afghanistan.

Soviet aid deliveries reached \$225 million in 1985 under old and new agreements, bringing deliveries since the invasion to \$1.6 billion. According to the Afghan Government, at least 5,000 Soviet economic technicians were employed in Afghanistan in 1985, working on 63 projects. Under an agreement signed on March 20, 1986, Soviet assistance would increase from 70% to 80% of all foreign aid. The aid program includes the construction of 840 apartments in Microrayon, a Kabul neighborhood where many Soviet advisers live.

Soviet-Afghan trade has tripled since the invasion. Trade hovered around the \$1 billion mark in 1985. The Soviets continued to take Afghan natural gas in exchange for essential commodities, machinery, and equipment. Some 65% of Afghanistan's total trade is now with the Soviet Union. A trade protocol signed in Moscow on February 13 provided for an additional 30% increase in Soviet-Afghan trade during new Five-Year Plan.

Social Developments

Education

Regime efforts to build a loyal following through indoctrination of the population continued without evident success. Kabul claims to have reached more than a million adult Afghans through its literacy programs and to have increased school attendance by 15%, to 685,000. Prime Minister Keshtmand claimed that a program to teach minority languages (a key divisive tactic) reached 6,000 students in 40 schools. This is probably a good indication of the regime's limited reach outside the capital.

Bringing Afghans, including young children, to study in the U.S.S.R. is an important element of the "Sovietization" effort. About 6,000 Afghans studied in the Soviet Union in 1986. An Afghan-Soviet protocol signed this summer provided for 1,800 secondary and university students to go to the U.S.S.R. in the 1986-87 school year. This represents about a 50% increase over 1985-86.

Study in the U.S.S.R. is unpopular due to the restrictions on student movement inside the Soviet Union and on the curriculum and to the increased prospect of being drafted on return. Afghan students in the Soviet Union, even in Central Asia, report being harassed by local people.

Health

The length of the conflict and the disruption of Afghanistan's rudimentary health infrastructure have contributed to an apparent increase in the incidence of disease. Most doctors have fled. Soviet physicians in urban areas or foreign volunteers in resistance-controlled areas can only meet a fraction of the demand for medical care. The wounded take up many of the existing hospital beds and other medical resources. Sanitation, never adequate, has become nonexistent in many areas. Endemic hepatitis plagues residents and Soviet soldiers alike. Tuberculosis, which through government vaccination efforts had been virtually eliminated, is reportedly on the rise.

Status of Women

Women traditionally were responsible for maintaining Afghan culture. Their role has been magnified under conditions of wartime dislocation, especially in the refugee camps. Women have a major

voice in the decision to leave the country. But most are reluctant to leave Afghanistan and give up their traditions.

The Kabul regime claims to promote the status of women, often featuring them in propaganda. The position of most has not changed much, although some women (for example, Karmal's wife, Mahbooba, and Anahita Ratebzad) reached positions of influence under Karmal. Women's issues apparently have been downplayed since the accession of Najibullah. The regime has formed and armed women's militia units, but participation has not been widespread.

Women's role in traditional Afghan society has been reflected in their limited participation in the resistance. Women have not taken a combat role, but in urban areas they have been active as spies and messengers for the *mujahidin*.

Religion

Under Najibullah, the atheist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan has tried harder to appear pro-Islam, for "we know our people are religious." The regime is now fronted by an acting chief of state, Haji Mohammed Chamkani, who uses the Mecca pilgrimage honorific as a first name.

The Kabul Marxists' belated recognition that they are incapable of eradicating the Islamic faith has increasingly led them to endorse religious symbols and institutions. The attendance of three top leaders—Karmal, Keshtmand, and Najibullah—at *Eid-al Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice) prayers in Kabul's central mosque, August 15, was emphasized in the regime media.

The government praises "patriotic clergy" (those who will accept Marxist rule) and has stepped up efforts to win over religious leaders. Currently, the regime claims more than 10,000 mullahs on its payroll, in some 5,000 mosques. The "patriotic clergy" do not enjoy popular respect and are often attacked by the resistance.

Kabul publicizes its allocations to religious institutions, without mentioning that these are paid out of the institutions' endowments, which have been seized by the state under various "reform" measures. Patronage is used to foster control. In June, Najibullah asked the National Fatherland Front to "enhance its role in the appointment and removal of imams."

The Islamic Affairs Department has been elevated to a ministry; the High Council of Ulema (religious scholars) oversees religious activities and property. Religious education is more directly controlled. Private *madrassahs* (religious schools) were closed down in 1978 and replaced by state-run institutions.

Illegal Drugs

Afghanistan continues to be a major producer of opium and hashish. The 1985 poppy harvest yielded an estimated 400-500 metric tons; preliminary reports suggest that the 1986 crop will be considerably larger. In recent years, Afghan traffickers have acquired the capability to refine opium into heroin. Much of Afghanistan's opium and nearly all of its heroin are exported to or through Pakistan and Iran.

Lack of progress against drug production and trafficking will continue until political and military stability returns to Afghanistan. All major resistance organizations oppose narcotic production, trafficking, and abuse, and most individual guerrillas adhere to this policy.

There are increasing indications that drugs from Afghanistan, some brought by returning troops, are turning up in the Soviet Union, aggravating domestic drug problems. The Soviet Union also is apparently being used as a transshipment route for Afghan drugs to the West. In June, Dutch police seized 485 pounds of pure heroin hidden in containers of Afghan raisins being unloaded from a Soviet freighter in Rotterdam.

Human Rights

As documented by reputable international organizations, e.g., Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN Human Rights Commission, human rights violations in Afghanistan continue to be perpetrated by Soviet and regime forces on a massive scale.¹ Through reprisal attacks, indiscriminate air and artillery bombardments, use of antipersonnel mines and booby-trapped toys, arbitrary killings, and torture, the Soviets and the Kabul regime have sought to intimidate the Afghan people

into submission or fleeing the country. In a February 1986 report to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan concluded that "continuation of the military solution in Afghanistan will lead to a situation approaching genocide."

Over one-third of Afghanistan's prewar population of 15 million has been violently displaced. Over 1 million Afghans have been driven into urban areas, such as Kabul, whose population has more than doubled since the invasion. An estimated 4 million Afghans have fled abroad, to become the world's largest refugee population. Human rights groups have estimated that more than 600,000 Afghans have been killed. Under the Kabul regime, arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, execution of political opponents, and the practice of torture are commonplace. Former prisoners told Amnesty International that Soviet advisers had been present at some torture sessions.

For the second year in a row, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Afghanistan by a vote of 89 in favor, 24 opposed, and 36 abstentions, an improvement over the 1985 vote. The resolution was based on the findings of Professor Felix Ermacora, the UN Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur.

Refugees

Afghans in Pakistan are the single largest group of refugees in the world. The Government of Pakistan reports registration of more than 2.8 million Afghans; numbers continue to grow, although at a slower pace than before. The refugees are sheltered in more than 300 camps, primarily in the rural areas of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Relief assistance, including food, shelter, clothing, and medicine, is provided by the international community, primarily through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Program.

Recently arrived refugees appear to be in worse shape than their predecessors and are more likely to have been directly touched by the fighting. They bring with them fewer possessions, or income-generating assets such as livestock, thereby placing an additional burden on relief efforts in Pakistan.

Despite considerable economic and political costs, the Government and people of Pakistan have extended an impressive welcome to the Afghans. The Government of Pakistan estimates that the annual relief effort costs some \$360 million, of which it bears nearly half the cost, chiefly expenditures for program administration and transportation of relief commodities.

In addition to the financial burden of caring for the Afghans, the citizens of Pakistan have absorbed costs far more difficult to calculate. Pakistan's inland transportation system moves several hundred thousand tons of relief materials each year. Land prices have risen as a result of the refugees' presence, and in an economy already experiencing high unemployment, Afghans sometimes compete with Pakistanis for scarce jobs. The refugees and their livestock have strained scarce water supplies and denuded forestlands in already poor areas near the frontier.

Refugee-Pakistani relations have been surprisingly good, with few violent incidents, largely due to the strong cultural and social ties between the indigenous population and the newcomers. Since early 1986, however, Soviet/DRA-backed attempts to exploit Pakistani concern over the refugees' presence have increased.

In a further effort to minimize social tensions and address the longer term needs of a population with no immediate prospect of returning home, many relief organizations, with the concurrence of the Government of Pakistan, have expanded their programming to include projects that enhance refugee self-reliance.

Between 1983 and 1986, the World Bank, in conjunction with the UNHCR, committed \$20 million for forestation, irrigation, and road-building projects that employ refugee and local labor in repairing environmental damage caused by the refugees. This project has recently been extended for 3 years.

The U.S. Government, the largest contributor to the relief effort, pledged nearly \$50 million for Afghan assistance in fiscal year 1986, including \$25 million worth of commodities through the World Food Program. To date, total U.S. contributions for Afghan refugee assistance exceed \$480 million. Other major contributors are Japan, Canada, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and a number of West European nations.

The second largest concentration of Afghan refugees is in Iran. The Iranian

¹*Situation of human rights in Afghanistan*. United Nations General Assembly Document A/41/778, 31 October 1986. Amnesty International, *Afghanistan: Torture of Political Prisoners*, November 1986. See also, Helsinki Watch Committee, *Afghan Children: The Other War*, December 1986.

Government estimates that up to 1.9 million Afghans are within its borders, half of them located in the sparsely populated eastern provinces of Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan. Many Afghans in Iran have successfully integrated into the local population. However, the government does provide some assistance through its Council for Afghan Refugees, part of the Iranian Ministry of the Interior. In addition to providing equipment for an extensive network of reception and transit centers, UNHCR is developing programs to train refugees in the skills they require to become self-sufficient. The United States is not a contributor to the UNHCR effort in Iran.

Regional Environment

Pakistan

During 1986, the war spilled over into Pakistan much more frequently than in previous years. The all-out effort by the Soviets to knock out *mujahidin* strongholds in Afghanistan near the Pakistan border led to a dramatic rise in border violations. By late November, air violations numbered more than 700 (compared to more than 200 in 1985) and artillery shelling more than 150 (compared to about 25 in 1985). Although most of the air violations were overflights, some were concentrated attacks on targets just inside Pakistan. Pakistan reports the loss of more than 100 civilians killed and 200 wounded in these attacks, about two-thirds from shelling.

In mid-May, the Pakistani Government announced that an intruding ground attack aircraft had been shot down by a Pakistani F-16 and had crashed inside Pakistan.

This year, Soviet/DRA agents have been actively engaged in a campaign of subversion inside Pakistan to turn Pakistani opinion against the government's policy of support for the Afghan refugees. Beginning with the January bombing of the Pakistan International Airlines office in Peshawar, subsequent terrorist acts in the Peshawar area have included train derailments and bombings in restaurants and at a well-known hotel.

Similar incidents have occurred elsewhere in the North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan. The Soviets have spent large sums of money trying to recruit Pakistani tribesmen to stir up

trouble inside Pakistan and to aid the Kabul regime against the resistance.

Pakistanis are understandably concerned about acts of sabotage and about the long-term impact of the war. Nevertheless, Pakistanis continue to show generous support for the Afghans.

Iran

Iran continues to call for the speedy and unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops and to condemn Soviet efforts to control Afghanistan, despite improved relations with the U.S.S.R. Iranian media strongly publicized Tehran's support for the resistance during the visit to Tehran of Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kornienko, the highest level Soviet visit since the revolution.

Iranian relations with Afghanistan deteriorated further in 1986, in tandem with DRA and Soviet allegations of increased Iranian support for the resistance. Early in the year, a group of Iranian religious leaders returned from several months in central Afghanistan. They had been sent by Khomeini's designated successor, Ayatollah Montazari, who has taken an active interest in the Afghan cause. Soviet media condemned the mission.

Complaints of border violations came from both sides during the course of the year. In March, Kabul charged Iran with causing a water shortage in the Afghan cities of the Helmand Valley, threatening to reopen a long-dormant dispute.

Iranian opposition groups—*Tudeh* and *Fedayeen-e Khalq*—continue to be



Women and children fetch water from one of the pumps financed by UNHCR.

welcome in Kabul. In a congratulatory message to Najibullah on his accession in May, *Tudeh* first secretary Khaveri called for strengthening ties between his party and the PDPA.

India

Prime Minister Gandhi reiterated India's interest in a political solution to the Afghan problem. India continued to call for an end to foreign intervention and interference in Afghanistan. India maintained good relations with the Kabul government and a modest program of assistance to the DRA. In 1986, India once again abstained on the UN General Assembly resolution condemning the presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan.

China

China cites the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan as a major obstacle to improving relations with the U.S.S.R. On the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion in December 1985, Chinese media noted that the invasion "sabotaged peace and stability" in the area and posed a threat to China's security. China viewed Gorbachev's Vladivostok withdrawal proposal with "interest," but when the offer proved to be a sham, the Chinese engaged in sharp public polemics with the U.S.S.R. and condemned Moscow's "facade of sincerity."

International Concern

The plight of the Afghan people has not escaped the world's attention. Countries around the globe took special notice of the sixth anniversary of the Soviet invasion in December 1985. The United States recognized Afghanistan Day, March 21, with a presidential proclamation.

Afghanistan was one of the most controversial issues at the congress of the World Peace Council, the most prominent Soviet international front group. At the congress, held in Copenhagen in October, Danish Radical Party president Niels Helveg Pedersen denounced the "inhuman and brutal war being waged

by the Soviets in Afghanistan." The conference concluded in uproar after 40 demonstrators, many of them Afghan refugees, were ejected.

In April, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited Kabul, the first visit since contacts were broken in 1982 after Kabul's refusal to allow the ICRC to visit prisoners held by the regime. Although the DRA agreed in principle to the reestablishment of an ICRC presence in Kabul, the issue of prisoner access has remained a major stumbling block.

International media interest continued to report on the plight of the Afghan people and their heroic resistance. Press coverage of resistance operations increased, despite the hazards of traveling inside Afghanistan and Soviet threats against journalists.

The United States Information Agency has funded a program to improve the ability of Afghans to tell their own story of the occupation and resistance, particularly through video.

In 1986, the Kabul regime allowed increased access for foreign journalists, including those from the West. A group of reporters was flown in from Moscow in January, during the customary winter lull, and to witness Soviet "withdrawal" ceremonies in October. Journalists, however, are given little scope to probe beyond regime interviews or guided tours.

The Department of State has issued a warning against travel by U.S. citizens in Afghanistan because of the war and the U.S. Government's inability, in a hostile war zone, to provide consular protection for American citizens who may be in distress.

UN Negotiations. Since January 1980, the UN General Assembly has voted eight times, by overwhelming margins, for a resolution calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan; the restoration of Afghanistan's independent and non-aligned status; Afghan self-determination; and the creation of conditions that would enable the refugees to return home with safety and honor. The resolution, introduced as in the past by Pakistan and cosponsored by 47 countries, passed again on November 5, 1986, by a vote of 122 to 20, with 11 abstentions, equaling last year's record positive vote.

UN attempts to negotiate a settlement date from a November 1980 mandate of the General Assembly. Negotia-

tions are led by UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs Diego Cordovez, the Secretary General's personal representative. Talks have been held periodically since 1982 in Geneva. Cordovez shuttles between delegations from Pakistan and Afghanistan, officially informing Iran of the discussions while unofficially informing the Soviets. Two sessions of indirect talks were held in Geneva in 1986. The first, convened in May, lasted an unprecedented 3 weeks. The negotiations recommenced July 30 and ran through early August. In addition, Cordovez shuttled between Islamabad and Kabul in March and again in November; during the November shuttle, he also visited Tehran.

At the May session, the discussion focused on a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal and on implementation issues. The DRA dropped its prior refusal to discuss a timetable without direct negotiations with Pakistan. Nevertheless, the parties remain far apart on this central issue. Pakistani Prime Minister Junejo on a June visit to Washington revealed that the Soviet-DRA side had offered a Soviet troop withdrawal timetable covering a 4-year period, which Pakistan rejected. He indicated that a 3- or 4-month period would be sufficient.

The UN Secretary General has reported that the four instruments that would comprise the agreement are "virtually complete." The text is largely settled on three of four proposed instruments, the first dealing with mutual noninterference in Afghanistan's affairs, the second encompassing international guarantees, and the third governing the voluntary return of the refugees.

The fourth agreement, which is to address the key issue of a Soviet troop withdrawal and the interrelationship between that document and the other three, is unfinished. The principal outstanding issue remains an agreement on a realistic timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Despite hopes generated at various points in the negotiations, the sides are far apart. The Soviet Union has not substantially altered its original position justifying its presence in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, all sides are committed to continuing the talks.

U.S. Policy

U.S. policy toward Afghanistan aims at achieving a negotiated political settlement, predicated on the prompt and complete withdrawal of Soviet troops and consistent with eight UN resolutions on Afghanistan. The United States supports UN-sponsored efforts to achieve a settlement and has expressed in writing its willingness to lend its political support to a comprehensive and balanced agreement that protects the legitimate security interests of all parties. Absent such a settlement, the United States is committed to support the Afghan cause through all appropriate means.

Humanitarian Assistance. The United States has responded to the plight of the Afghan people by establishing a long-term humanitarian aid program for war-affected Afghans. The program emphasizes direct assistance to the Afghan resistance alliance and is intended to provide those

remaining in Afghanistan with the means to sustain themselves. In fiscal year 1986, Congress appropriated \$15 million in Economic Support Funds for war-affected Afghans. In fiscal year 1987, Congress earmarked an additional \$30 million for the program.

Administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the program includes three new projects in health, education, and commodity support.

U.S. and European private voluntary organizations help implement the program. Support is being provided from the United States, France, Belgium, West Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Austria. In 1986, total support for voluntary agencies amounted to \$10 million; an additional \$10 million is planned for 1987.

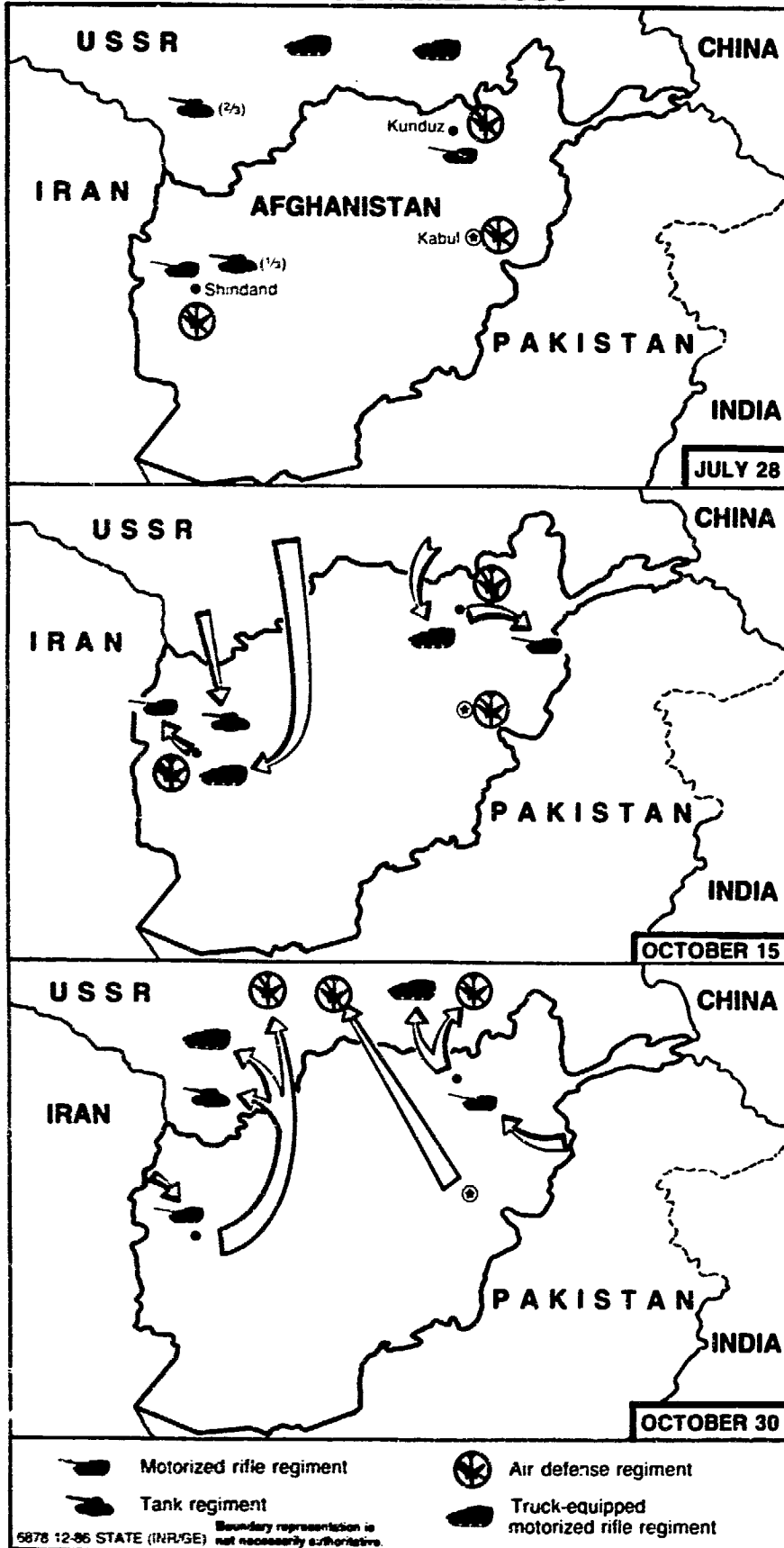
Educational assistance, implemented through the alliance education committee, will provide direct support (textbooks, supplies, curriculum development, teacher training, and stipends) to primary education in free areas of Afghanistan. The health project envisions a massive training program of first

aid for emergency care, mobile health clinics and hospitals for urgent care, a medical evacuation system, and a supply system. Basic humanitarian goods, such as food, agricultural commodities, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, and animals also will be furnished. In addition, under PL-480, a Title II program consisting of wheat and vegetable oil valued at about \$15 million was approved in 1986 for war-affected Afghans.

Congress has separately authorized \$10 million for transporting humanitarian commodities to war-affected Afghans; the authority also provides funds to transport Afghan patients to the United States for medical treatment. ■

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SOVIET FORCE MOVEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH WITHDRAWAL SCHEME - 1986



Errata

On the bottom of p. 10, column 3, there is a typographical error. The second sentence should read: "Some Soviet sources indicate that casualties could be considerably higher, perhaps as many as 25,000 killed over the course of the war, but this cannot be confirmed."

On the maps on page 3 and on page 11, the boundary between India and Pakistan is not properly depicted. The depiction of the boundary has been corrected on the map below and on the reverse.

